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I, Fatima Beattie, Commissioner of Patents, grant a Standard Patent with the following particulars:

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Invention Title: "Method and Apparatus for Controlling the Cost of Playing an Electronic
Gaming Device"

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best
method of performing it known to me:-

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS

1. A method of configuring electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:
 - implementing selected configuration parameters at each machine;
 - 5 monitoring a plurality of variables related to play on the gaming machines;
 - establishing a predetermined criterion for one of said variables;
 - permitting play to occur at the machines;
 - selecting one of the machines when said one variable meets the criterion;
 - issuing a computer command; and
- 10 changing a configuration parameter of the selected machine responsive to the command.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the changed configuration parameter comprises game speed.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein said one variable comprises the rate at which
15 the interconnected machines are played.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein said one variable comprises the time that the interconnected machines are played.
5. The method of claim 2 wherein said one variable comprises the status of a player of one of said machines.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the changed configuration parameter comprises payback percentage.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein said one variable comprises the rate at which the interconnected machines are played.
- 5 8. The method of claim 6 wherein said one variable comprises the time that the interconnected machines are played.
9. The method of claim 6 wherein said one variable comprises the status of a player of one of said machines.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein the changed configuration parameter
10 comprises game appearance.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein said one variable comprises the rate at which the interconnected machines are played.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein said one variable comprises the time that the interconnected machines are played.
- 15 13. The method of claim 10 wherein said one variable comprises the status of a player of one of said machines.
- 14 . The method of claim 1 wherein said one variable comprises the rate at which the interconnected machines are played.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein said one variable comprises the time that the
20 interconnected machines are played.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein said one variable comprises the status of a player of one of said machines.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein said method further comprises:

issuing a unique identification card to a player of one of the gaming machines;

5 sensing engagement of the card with a reader associated with one of the gaming machines;

monitoring the player's play on said one gaming machine;

transmitting data relating to the player's play over the network; and

storing the data on a computer connected to the network.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the status of a player of one of said
10 machines is reflected in the stored data and wherein establishing a predetermined criterion for one of said variables comprises establishing a predetermined level of player play.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein establishing a predetermined level of player play comprises establishing a predetermined rate of play.

15 20. The method of claim 16 wherein the status of a player comprises whether the player is a member of one of a plurality of classes.

21. The method of claim 16 wherein the status of the player comprises whether the player is recognized by a player-tracking system operated on the network.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said method further comprises:

setting the payback percentage to a first level when the player is not recognized; and

setting the payback percentage to a second level when the player is recognized.

- 5 23. A method of configuring electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:

permitting play to occur at the machines;

selecting one of the machines;

issuing a computer command; and

- 10 changing the game speed of the selected machine responsive to the command.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein said method further comprises:

tracking the amount of money wagered on the interconnected electronic gaming machines;

- 15 establishing a predetermined criterion relating to the level of tracked money; and

changing the game speed of a plurality of the interconnected gaming machines when the level of tracked money satisfies the predetermined criterion.

- 20 25. The method of claim 24 wherein establishing a predetermined criterion relating to the level of tracked money comprises establishing a predetermined criterion relating to the rate of money wagered.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said method further comprises decreasing the playing speed responsive to a first rate of money wagered and increasing the speed responsive to a second rate of money wagered.

27. The method of claim 23 wherein said method further comprises:

5 tracking the time;

establishing predetermined criterion relating to the time; and

changing the game speed of a plurality of the interconnected gaming machines when the time satisfies the predetermined criterion.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of tracking the time comprises
10 tracking the time of day.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of tracking the time comprises tracking the day of the week.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of tracking the time comprises tracking the date of the year.

15 31. The method of claim 27 wherein said method further comprises:

tracking the amount of money wagered on the interconnected electronic gaming machines;

establishing a predetermined criterion that is a function of the level of tracked money and the time; and

20 changing the game speed of a plurality of the interconnected gaming machines when the level of tracked money and the time satisfies the predetermined criterion.

32. The method of claim 23 wherein said method further comprises:

tracking a player of the gaming machines;

establishing a predetermined player criterion; and

5 changing said game speed at each gaming machine where a player meets the criterion.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein the criterion comprises whether the player is recognized by a player-tracking system operated on the network.

34. The method of claim 32 wherein the criterion comprises determining whether the player is wagering at a predetermined rate.

10 35. A method of configuring electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:

defining a first time period;

defining a second time period;

15 storing data representative to the first and second periods in the computer;

issuing a first computer command at the start of the first period;

implementing a first payback percentage for one of the gaming machines responsive to the first command;

permitting play to occur on the machines;

issuing a second computer command at the start of the second period; and

implementing a second payback percentage for said one gaming machine responsive to the second command.

5 36. The method of claim 35 wherein said method further comprises communicating the second command to an input port of said one gaming machine via the network.

37. The method of claim 35 wherein implementing a first payback percentage for one of the gaming machines responsive to the first command comprises paying
10 responsive to a first payback schedule stored in the electronic gaming machine, and wherein implementing a second payback percentage for said one gaming machine responsive to the second command further comprises:

using the network to track the amount of money played on said one gaming machine;

15 allocating a predetermined percentage of the money played to a bonus pool;

initiating a bonus period responsive to the second command;

paying the bonus via the gaming machine.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein paying the bonus via the gaming machine
20 comprises paying a predetermined additional amount each time a payment is made in accordance with the first payout schedule.

39. The method of claim 37 wherein said method further comprises:

implementing a first payback percentage for a plurality of the gaming machines responsive to the first command;

implementing a second payback percentage for the plurality of gaming machines responsive to the second command;

5 using the network to track the amount of money played on the plurality of gaming machines;

paying the bonus via one of the plurality of gaming machines.

40. The method of claim 35 wherein defining first and second time periods comprises:

10 defining a first time period during which play on the machines is typically at a high level; and

defining a second time period during which play on the machines is typically at a low level.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein said second payback percentage is higher
15 than said first payback percentage.

42. A method of configuring an electronic gaming machine comprising:

implementing a pay table in the gaming machine;

monitoring a plurality of variables related to play on the gaming machine;

establishing a predetermined criterion for one of said variables;

20 permitting play to occur at the gaming machine;

tracking the amount of money played on the gaming machine;

- allocating a predetermined percentage of the money played to a bonus pool;
- initiating a bonus period when said one variable meets the criterion; and
- paying in accordance with said pay table and from said bonus pool via the gaming machine.
43. The method of claim 42 wherein said one variable comprises the rate at which the machine is played.
44. The method of claim 42 wherein said one variable comprises the time that the machine is played.
45. The method of claim 42 wherein said one variable comprises the status of a player of said machine.
46. The method of claim 45 wherein the status of a player comprises whether the player is a member of one of a plurality of classes.
47. The method of claim 42 wherein establishing a predetermined criterion for one of said variables comprises establishing a predetermined level of player play.
48. The method of claim 47 wherein establishing a predetermined level of player play comprises establishing a predetermined rate of play.
49. A method of operating electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:
- permitting a player to play at the machines;
- assigning a status to the player related to playing activity of the player;
- tracking the playing activity of the player playing at one or more of the machines;
- monitoring the status assigned to the player playing at said one or more of said machines;



selecting one of the said machines in response to the status of the player playing at said one machine; and

paying a bonus to the player via said one machine that was selected.

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50. The method of claim 49 wherein monitoring the status of a player of one of said machines comprises determining whether a player of one of said machines is a member of one of a plurality of classes.
- 5 51. The method of claim 50 wherein determining whether a player of one of said machines is a member of one of a plurality of classes comprises:
- issuing a unique identification card to the player; and
 - sensing engagement of the card with a reader associated with said one gaming machine.
- 10 52. The method of claim 51 wherein information relating to the player's class membership is reflected in stored data that is accessible by the host computer.
- 15 53. The method of any one of claims 49 to 52 wherein the status of the player comprises whether the player is recognized by a player-tracking system operated on the network.
- 20 54. The method of any one of claims 49 to 53 wherein said method further comprises issuing a computer command from the host computer.
- 25 55. The method of claim 54 wherein paying a bonus to the player via said one machine comprises paying a bonus to the player via said one machine responsive to the computer command.
- 30 56. The method of any one of claims 49 to 55 wherein said method further comprises implementing a pay table in each machine and wherein said bonus is independent of any payment to the player resulting from the pay table.
57. A method of configuring electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.



58. A method of configuring an electronic gaming machine substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.
59. A method of operating electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer substantially as described herein with
5 reference to the accompanying drawings.

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